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(54) **WELL TOOL ASSEMBLIES WITH QUICK CONNECTORS AND SHOCK MITIGATING CAPABILITIES**

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See application file for complete search history.

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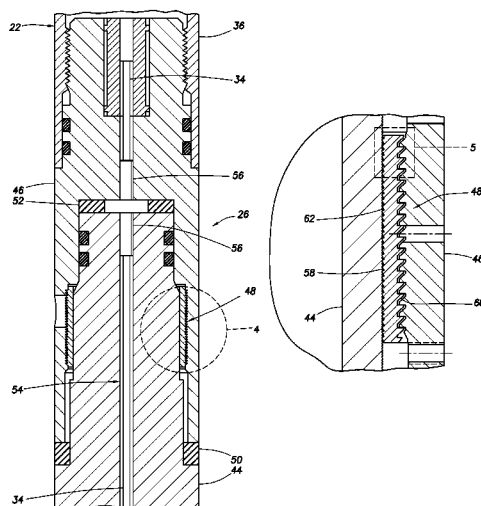
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ABSTRACT

A method can include interconnecting a well tool in a well tool assembly with a shock mitigating connection, the interconnecting being performed without threading, and positioning the well tool assembly in a wellbore. A well perforating assembly can include at least two perforating devices, a detonation train extending through the perforating devices, and a shock absorber positioned between the perforating devices. A method of assembling a perforating assembly can include, prior to installing the perforating assembly in a wellbore, pushing one perforating device connector into another perforating device connector without threading the connectors together, thereby: a) preventing disconnection of the connectors and b) making a connection in a detonation train. A well system can include a perforating assembly including multiple perforating guns and multiple shock absorbers. Each shock absorber may be interconnected between at least two of the perforating guns.

8 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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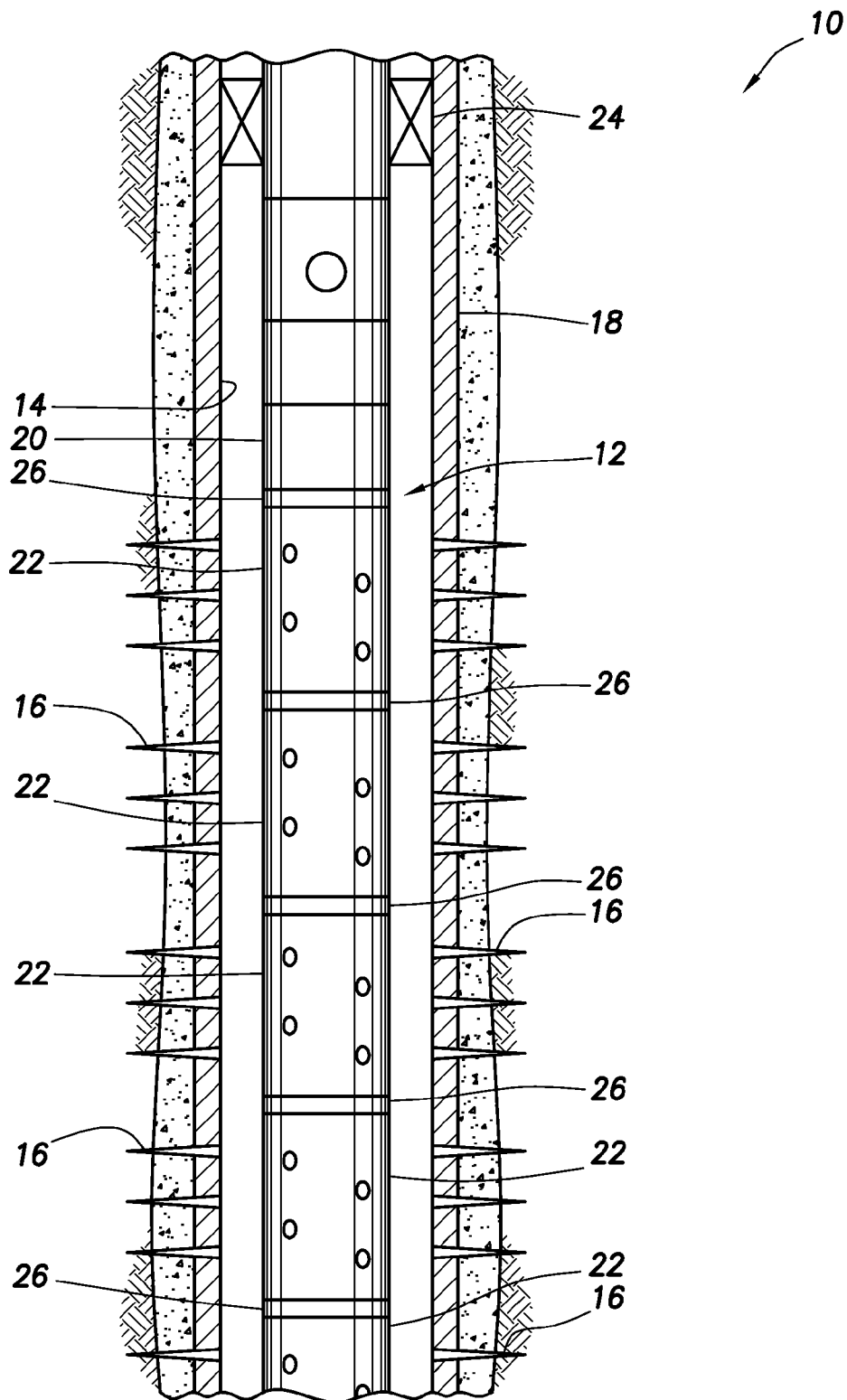
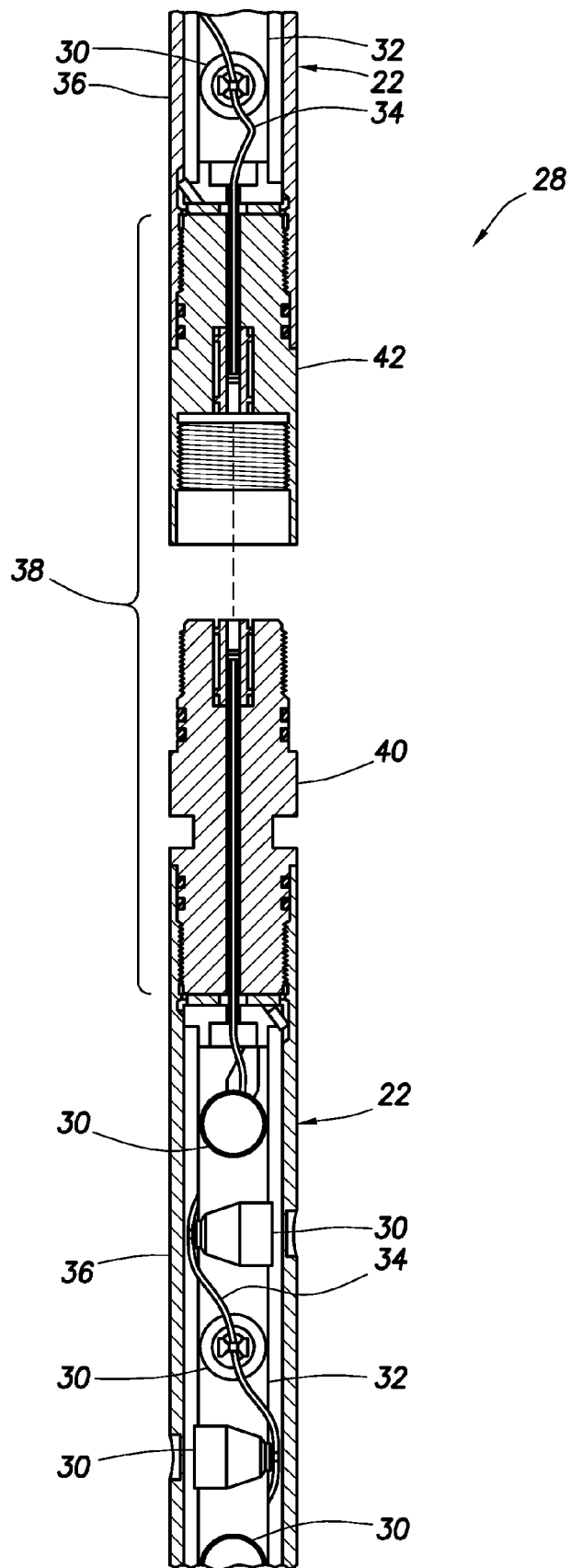


FIG. 1

FIG.2
(PRIOR ART)



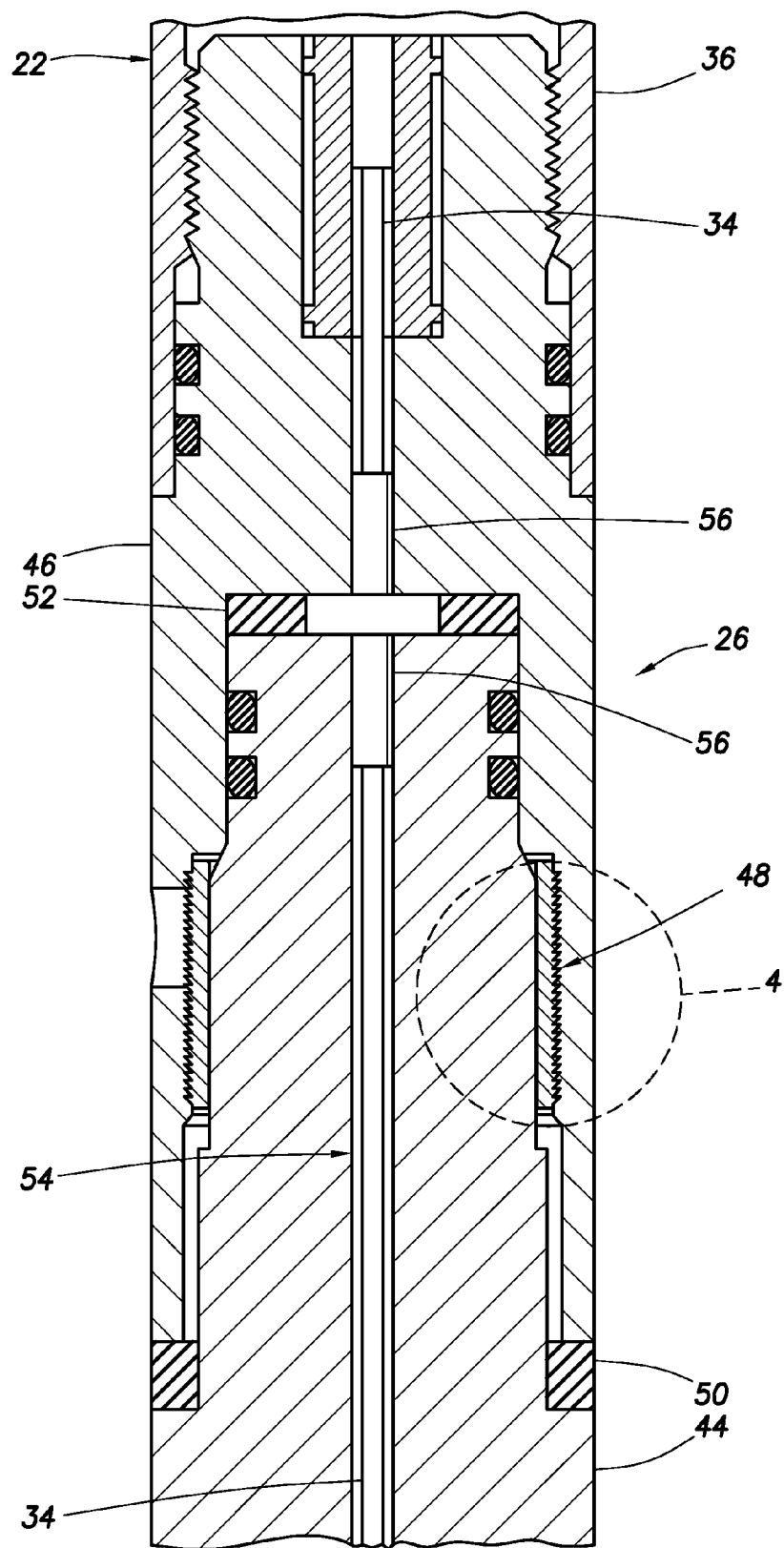


FIG.3

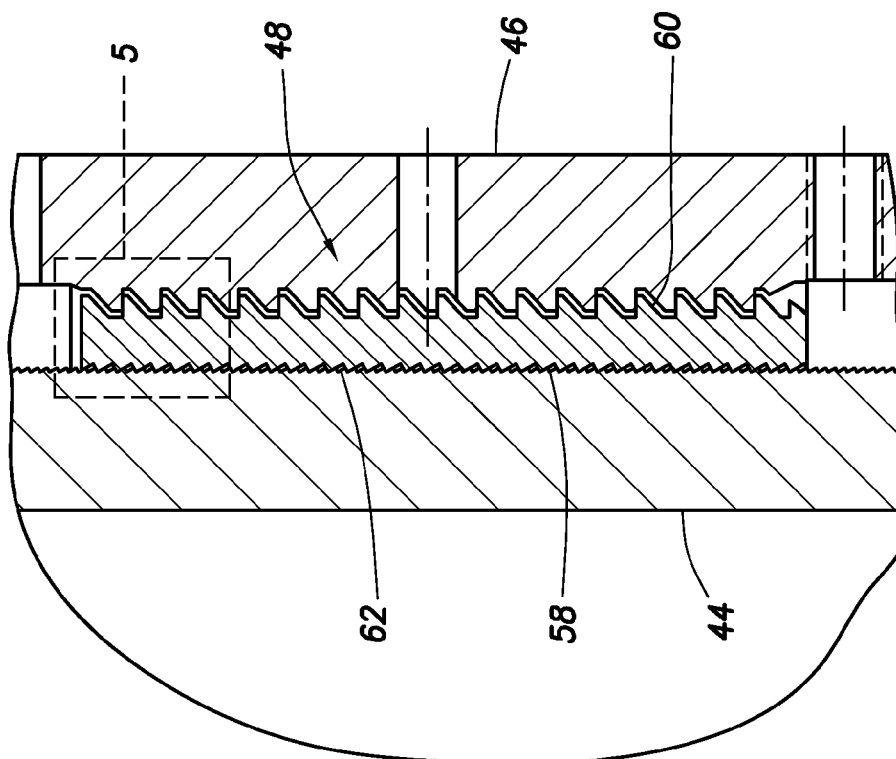


FIG. 4

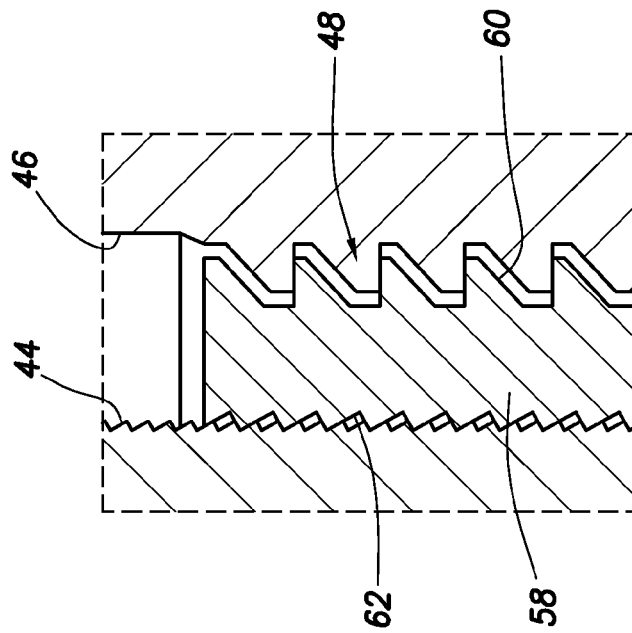


FIG. 5

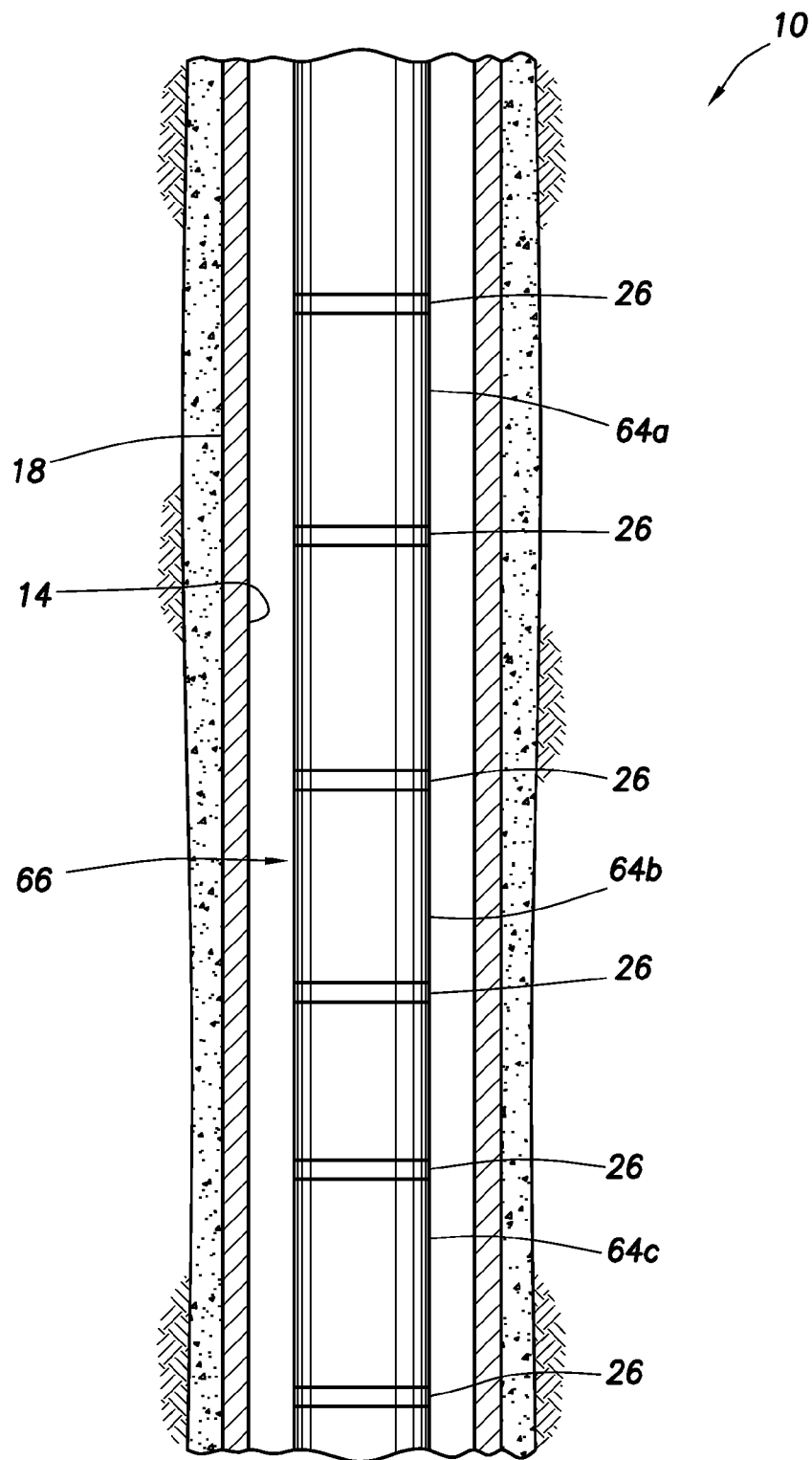


FIG. 6

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WELL TOOL ASSEMBLIES WITH QUICK CONNECTORS AND SHOCK MITIGATING CAPABILITIES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

The present application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/413,588 filed on 6 Mar. 2012, which claims priority to International application no. PCT/US2011/029412 filed on 22 Mar. 2011. The entire disclosures of these prior applications are incorporated herein by this reference.

BACKGROUND

The present disclosure relates generally to equipment utilized and operations performed in conjunction with subterranean wells and, in an embodiment described herein, more particularly provides a well tool assembly with quick connectors and shock mitigating capabilities.

Shock absorbers have been used in the past in attempts to prevent damage to well equipment resulting from firing perforating guns and other events. In some situations, a shock absorber is interconnected between a perforating assembly and the well equipment (such as, a packer, gravel packing equipment, instruments, etc.) to be protected from shock loads.

However, testing has revealed that such shock loads are transmitted in a very short amount of time (e.g., ~10-30 milliseconds), and conventional shock absorbers are either too rigid to react adequately to the shock, or too compliant to absorb the shock. Therefore, it will be appreciated that improvements are needed in the art of mitigating shock for well assemblies.

Improvements are also needed in the art of connecting well tool assemblies. Such improvements could reduce the amount of time needed to connect perforating devices or other well tools, and could prevent damage to connectors used to connect well tools.

SUMMARY

In carrying out the principles of the present disclosure, systems and methods are provided which bring improvements to the art. One example is described below in which multiple shock absorbers are interconnected in a perforating assembly. Another example is described below in which connections are made between well tools without threading.

A method described below can include interconnecting a well tool in a well tool assembly with a shock mitigating connection, the interconnecting being performed without threading, and positioning the well tool assembly in a wellbore. The method may be used for well perforating assemblies, or for other types of well tool assemblies.

In one aspect, a well perforating assembly is disclosed. The perforating assembly can include at least two perforating devices, a detonation train extending through the perforating devices, and a shock absorber positioned between the perforating devices.

In another aspect, a method of assembling a perforating assembly is described below. The method can include, prior to installing the perforating assembly in a wellbore, pushing one perforating device connector into another perforating device connector without threading the connectors together, thereby: a) preventing disconnection of the connectors and b) making a connection in a detonation train.

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In yet another aspect, a well system is provided which can include a perforating assembly including multiple perforating guns and multiple shock absorbers. Each shock absorber is interconnected between at least two of the perforating guns.

These and other features, advantages and benefits will become apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art upon careful consideration of the detailed description of representative embodiments of the disclosure hereinbelow and the accompanying drawings, in which similar elements are indicated in the various figures using the same reference numbers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a representative partially cross-sectional view of a well system and associated method which can embody principles of the present disclosure.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged scale representative partially cross-sectional view of a prior art perforating assembly.

FIG. 3 is a representative cross-sectional view of a perforating assembly which can embody principles of this disclosure.

FIG. 4 is a further enlarged scale cross-sectional view of detail 4 in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a still further enlarged scale cross-sectional view of detail 5 in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a representative partially cross-sectional view of another configuration of the well system and method.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Representatively illustrated in FIG. 1 is a well system 10 and associated method which can embody principles of the present disclosure. In the system 10, a perforating assembly 12 is positioned in a wellbore 14 for forming perforations 16 through casing 18 lining the wellbore.

The perforating assembly 12 can include any number of perforating devices, such as a firing head 20 and perforating guns 22. The firing head 20 fires the perforating guns 22 in response to a particular stimulus (e.g., pressure levels, pressure pulses, a telemetry signal, a bar dropped through a tubular string to the firing head, etc.). Any type of firing head, and any type of perforating guns, may be used in the perforating assembly 12 in keeping with the principles of this disclosure.

Although only one firing head 20 connected above the perforating guns 22 is depicted in FIG. 1, it will be appreciated that any number or position of firing head(s) may be used, as desired. For example, the firing head 20 could be connected at a lower end of the perforating assembly 12, multiple firing heads could be used, a separate firing head could be used for each perforating gun, etc.

In the system 10, it is desired to prevent unsettling or otherwise damaging a packer 24 set in the casing 18 above the perforating guns 22. The packer 24 is used herein as one example of a type of well equipment which can be protected using the principles of this disclosure, but it should be clearly understood that any other types of well equipment (e.g., anchors, hangers, instruments, other perforating devices, etc.) may be protected in other examples.

In one unique feature of the well system 10, a shock absorbing connection 26 is disposed between each adjacent pair of the perforating guns 22, and a shock absorbing connection is also disposed between the firing head 20 and the uppermost perforating gun. The connections 26 also allow the perforating devices (firing head 20 and perforating guns 22) to be quickly assembled to each other prior to installing the perforating assembly 12 in the wellbore 14.

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Although a connection 26 is depicted in FIG. 1 between each adjacent pair of the perforating guns 22, it will be appreciated that the connections could be otherwise positioned. In other examples, some adjacent pairs of perforating guns 22 may not have the connections 26 between them. Thus, it is not necessary for each adjacent pair of perforating guns 22 to have one of the connections 26 between them, nor is it necessary for one of the connections 26 to be positioned between the firing head 20 and the adjacent perforating gun 22.

By interconnecting multiple shock absorbing connections 26 in the perforating assembly 12, each connection only has to absorb shock generated due to firing of the adjacent perforating device(s), and accumulation of the shock loads along the perforating assembly is prevented, or at least beneficially mitigated. Greater or fewer numbers of the connections 26 may be used in the perforating assembly 12 as needed to achieve a desired level of shock mitigation.

Referring additionally now to FIG. 2, a partially cross-sectional view of a prior art perforating assembly 28 is representatively illustrated. The perforating assembly 28 includes the perforating guns 22, with each perforating gun including perforating charges 30, a charge carrier 32 and detonating cord 34 in a generally tubular gun body 36.

However, instead of the shock absorbing connections 26 used in the system 10, the perforating assembly 28 of FIG. 2 includes a rigid, threaded connection 38 between the perforating guns 22. Specifically, a connector 40 having opposing externally-threaded ends is threaded into one perforating gun 22, and another connector 42 having opposing externally- and internally-threaded ends is threaded into another perforating gun 22.

When the connectors 40, 42 are threaded together, the rigid, threaded connection 38 is made. The connection 38 has no shock absorbing capability, and threading the connectors 40, 42 to each other can be difficult when the guns 22 are long and/or heavy, sometimes resulting in damage to threads on the connectors.

The improved connection 26 used in the system 10 is representatively illustrated in FIG. 3. The connection 26 may be used between perforating guns 22, between a perforating gun and the firing head 20, or between any other well tools or equipment. The connection 26 may also be used in perforating assemblies other than the perforating assembly 12, and in well systems other than the well system 10, in keeping with the principles of this disclosure.

The connection 26 includes a connector 44 which is attached to a perforating device (such as a perforating gun or firing head, not shown), and another connector 46 which is depicted in FIG. 3 as being attached to a perforating gun 22. The connectors 44, 46 may each be attached to the respective perforating guns 22, firing head 20 or other perforating devices or other well tools by threading or any other suitable means.

In one unique feature of the connection 26, the connector 44 can be inserted and pushed into the other connector 46 without threading. Once connected in this manner, an engagement device 48 prevents disconnection of the connectors 44, 46.

The engagement device 48 permits the connector 44 to displace in one direction longitudinally toward the other connector 46, but prevents the connector 44 from displacing in the opposite longitudinal direction relative to the connector 46. Thus, the connection 26 can be longitudinally compressed, but the device 48 prevents the connection from being elongated longitudinally.

One benefit of this arrangement is that the perforating devices or other well tools attached to the connectors 44, 46

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can be quickly and conveniently connected to each other, without any need for threading the connector 44 into the other connector 46. Another benefit of this arrangement is that detonation transfer components (such as, detonation boosters 56 attached at ends of the detonating cords 34) are brought into close proximity to each other when the connector 44 is pushed into the other connector 46. In this manner, a connection is made in a detonation train 54 (including the detonating cord 34, boosters 56, etc.) which extends through the connection 26.

Another unique feature of the connection 26 is that it includes shock absorbers 50, 52 disposed between the connectors 44, 46. The shock absorbers 50, 52 function to absorb shock loads which would otherwise be transmitted through the connection 26.

The shock absorbers 50, 52 are preferably made of a material which can deform appropriately to absorb the shock loads resulting from firing of the perforating devices. Some acceptable materials for the shock absorbers 50, 52 can include brass, aluminum, rubber, foamed materials, or any other shock absorbing materials.

The shock absorbers 50, 52 may be annular-shaped as depicted in FIG. 3, or they could have any other shapes, such as round, square, T- or I-shaped cross-sections, etc. The size, shape, material and/or other characteristics of the shock absorbers 50, 52 may be customized for their placement in the perforating assembly 12, position in the well, size and length of the adjacent perforating devices or other well tools, etc.

Although two shock absorbers 50, 52 are illustrated in the connection 26 example of FIG. 3, in other examples different numbers of shock absorbers (including one) may be used. In addition, although in FIG. 3 the detonation train 54 is depicted as extending through the shock absorbers 50, 52, such an arrangement is not necessary in keeping with the principles of this disclosure.

Since the connection 26 allows for longitudinal compression of the connectors 44, 46, when a compressive shock load is transmitted to the connection, the connectors will compress somewhat, with the shock absorbers 50, 52 thereby absorbing the compressive shock load. In this manner, transmission of the shock load across the connection 26 is prevented, or is at least significantly mitigated.

Referring additionally now to FIG. 4, an enlarged scale cross-sectional view of the engagement device 48 is representatively illustrated. As depicted in FIG. 4, the engagement device 48 comprises a segmented or longitudinally split sleeve 58 having a series of relatively coarse pitch ramp-type profiles 60 on an exterior thereof, and a series of relatively fine pitch profiles 62 on an interior thereof.

The profiles 60, 62 may be formed as threads on the engagement device 48, with the respective connectors 46, 44 having complementarily shaped profiles formed thereon. For example, the profiles 60 could be formed as 45-degree buttress threads, and the profiles 62 could be formed as a "phonograph" finish (very fine grooves).

However, it should be understood that, preferably, the connectors 44, 46 are not threaded to each other with the engagement device 48. Instead, the connector 44 is preferably pushed into the connector 46 (without rotating or threading either connector), and the engagement device 48 prevents the connector 44 from being withdrawn from the connector 46.

In the example of FIG. 4, this result is accomplished due to the ramped interface between the profiles 60 and the connector 46, and gripping of the connector 44 by the profiles 62. A further enlarged scale view of this engagement between the connectors 44, 46 and the device 48 is representatively illustrated in FIG. 5.

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If a tensile load is applied across the connection 26, the profiles 62 will grip the outer surface of the connector 44, so that the sleeve 58 attempts to displace with the connector 44. However, the ramps of the profiles 60, in engagement with the connector 46, prevent downward (as viewed in FIG. 5) displacement of the connector 44 and sleeve 58, and cause the sleeve to be compressed radially inward.

The inward compression of the sleeve 58 causes the profiles 62 to more securely grip the outer surface of the connector 44. The sleeve 58 can be formed with a C-shaped lateral cross-section, so that it can be readily deformed inward. The sleeve 58 can also be deformed radially outward, if desired, so that it no longer grips the outer surface of the connector 44, thereby allowing the connector 44 to be withdrawn from the connector 46, for example, to disassemble the perforating assembly 12 after firing, after a misfire, etc.

Although the connection 26 is described above as having multiple benefits (e.g., speed of connecting, lack of threading connectors 44, 46 to each other, shock absorbing capability, detonation train 54 connecting, etc.), it is not necessary for all of the above-described benefits to be incorporated into a single connection embodying principles of this disclosure. The connection 26 could include one of the above-described benefits, any subset of those benefits, and/or other benefits.

Referring additionally now to FIG. 6, another configuration of the well system 10 is representatively illustrated. In this configuration, the connections 26 are used to prevent or mitigate shock being transmitted to various well tools 64a-c interconnected in a well tool assembly 66 positioned in the wellbore 14.

In this example, the well tool 64a comprises an instrument carrier (containing, for example, one or more pressure and/or temperature sensors, etc.), the well tool 64b comprises a fluid sampler (e.g., with chambers therein for containing selectively filled fluid samples), and the well tool 64c comprises an electronics module (e.g., used for receiving, storing and/or transmitting data, commands, etc., measuring parameters, etc.). However, it should be clearly understood that these are merely examples of well tools which can benefit from the principles of this disclosure, and any type of well tool may be used in the assembly 66 in keeping with those principles.

It is not necessary for the assembly 66 to include multiple well tools. Instead, a single well tool may benefit from use of the connections 26.

It is not necessary for the connections 26 to be used on both ends of each of the well tools 64a-c as depicted in FIG. 6. Instead, a connection 26 may be used on only one end of a well tool, or in positions other than the ends of a well tool.

In the example of FIG. 6, the connections 26 prevent or mitigate shock being transmitted to the well tools 64a-c interconnected in the assembly 66, and also allow the well tools to be interconnected in the assembly quickly and without threading. Note that the firing head 20, perforating guns 22 and packer 24 described above are also examples of well tools which can benefit from use of the connection 26.

It may now be fully appreciated that the above disclosure provides several advancements to the art. The connection 26 depicted in FIGS. 1 & 3-6 allows for shock loads to be absorbed or at least mitigated between perforating devices or other well tools, and allows perforating devices and other well tools to be connected to each other quickly and without threading.

A method described above can include interconnecting a well tool 64a-c in a well tool assembly 66 with a shock mitigating connection 26, the interconnecting being performed without threading, and positioning the well tool assembly 66 in a wellbore 14.

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The connection 26 may comprise at least one shock absorber 50, 52 positioned between connectors 44, 46. The connection 26 may comprise a sleeve 58 having relatively coarse pitch profiles 60 on one side, and the sleeve 58 having relatively fine pitch profiles 62 on an opposite side.

Interconnecting can include pushing one connector 44 into another connector 46 without threading the connectors 44, 46 together, thereby preventing disconnection of the connectors 44, 46. An engagement device 48 may permit relative displacement between the connectors 44, 46 in one longitudinal direction, but prevent relative displacement between the connectors 44, 46 in an opposite longitudinal direction.

The well tool may be one or more of a perforating gun 22, a firing head 20, a packer 24, an instrument carrier 64a, a fluid sampler 64b and an electronics module 64c.

A well perforating assembly 12 described above can include at least two perforating devices (such as firing head 20, perforating gun 22, etc.), a detonation train 54 extending through the perforating devices 20, 22, and a shock absorber 50, 52 positioned between the perforating devices 20, 22.

The shock absorber 50, 52 preferably absorbs longitudinally directed shock generated by firing at least one of the perforating devices 20, 22.

The detonation train 54 may extend longitudinally through the shock absorber 50, 52.

The perforating devices may comprise perforating guns 22. The perforating devices may comprise a perforating gun 22 and a firing head 20.

The assembly 12 can include a connection 26 between the perforating devices 20, 22. An engagement device 48 of the connection 26 may permit longitudinal compression of the connection 26, but prevent elongation of the connection 26.

The connection 26 can comprise connectors 44, 46 attached to the respective perforating devices. The engagement device 48 may permit relative displacement between the connectors 44, 46 in one longitudinal direction, but prevent relative displacement between the connectors 44, 46 in an opposite longitudinal direction.

The connectors 44, 46 are preferably connected to each other without threading together the connectors 44, 46. The detonation train 54 may extend through the connectors 44, 46.

Also described above is a method of assembling a perforating assembly 12. The method can include, prior to installing the perforating assembly 12 in a wellbore 14, pushing one perforating device connector 44 into another perforating device connector 46 without threading the connectors 44, 46 together, thereby: a) preventing disconnection of the connectors 44, 46 and b) making a connection in a detonation train 54.

The method can also include positioning a shock absorber 50, 52 between the connectors 44, 46. The shock absorber 50, 52 may absorb longitudinally directed shock generated by firing at least one perforating device 20, 22. The detonation train 54 may extend longitudinally through the shock absorber 50, 52.

Each, or at least one, of the perforating device connectors 44, 46 may be attached to a perforating gun 22. At least one of the perforating device connectors 44, 46 may be attached to a firing head 20.

The above disclosure also provides to the art a well system 10. The well system 10 can comprise a perforating assembly 12 including multiple perforating guns 22 and multiple shock absorbers 50, 52.

Each shock absorber 50, 52 may be interconnected between at least two of the perforating guns 22. Each shock absorber 50, 52 preferably mitigates transmission of shock from one connector 44 to another 46, the connectors being

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longitudinally compressible but prevented from elongating. A detonation train **54** may extend through the shock absorbers **50, 52**.

It is to be understood that the various embodiments of the present disclosure described herein may be utilized in various orientations, such as inclined, inverted, horizontal, vertical, etc., and in various configurations, without departing from the principles of the present disclosure. The embodiments are described merely as examples of useful applications of the principles of the disclosure, which is not limited to any specific details of these embodiments.

In the above description of the representative embodiments of the disclosure, directional terms, such as “above,” “below,” “upper,” “lower,” etc., are used merely for convenience in referring to the accompanying drawings.

Of course, a person skilled in the art would, upon a careful consideration of the above description of representative embodiments of the disclosure, readily appreciate that many modifications, additions, substitutions, deletions, and other changes may be made to the specific embodiments, and such changes are contemplated by the principles of the present disclosure. Accordingly, the foregoing detailed description is to be clearly understood as being given by way of illustration and example only, the spirit and scope of the present invention being limited solely by the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

interconnecting a well tool in a well tool assembly via a well tool connection comprising a male connector and a female connector, the female connector including a

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sleeve having relatively coarse pitch profiles on one side and relatively fine pitch profiles on an opposite side, the interconnecting of the well tool in the well tool assembly being performed by pushing the male connector into the female connector without rotating the male connector relative to the female connector, wherein radially outward deformation of the sleeve allows the male connector to be withdrawn from the female connector; and then inserting the well tool in a wellbore.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the well tool connection further comprises at least one shock absorber.

3. The method of claim **1**, wherein the sleeve permits insertion of the male connector into the female connector and prevents the male connector from being withdrawn from the female connector.

4. The method of claim **3**, wherein the sleeve permits relative displacement between the connectors in one longitudinal direction, but prevents relative displacement between the connectors in an opposite longitudinal direction.

5. The method of claim **1**, wherein the well tool is selected from a group comprising: a perforating gun, a firing head, a packer, an instrument carrier, a fluid sampler and an electronics module.

6. The method of claim **1**, wherein the interconnecting comprises making a detonation train connection.

7. The method of claim **1**, wherein the sleeve comprises at least one longitudinal slit.

8. The method of claim **1**, wherein the sleeve comprises multiple segments.

* * * * *